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Acquisitiong Archaeology-Year Two From Stratum to Strain

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rationale for a publisher's pricing to be based on total faculty or enrolment numbers where it specializes in one discipline, such as medical publishers, and learned society publishers. Those publishers have looked at FTEs within the particular discipline. But for the library, managing the FTE data for different subjects is an onerous duty.

A rational basis for pricing to the individual institution could be its total funding, from public and private sources. Such data is readily available in the UK from **HESA**. Universities have to produce audited accounts that provide reliable financial data for such a calculation. Indeed, the UK's **JISC Banding** is based on the income of each higher education institution from public funds.

Usage-based pricing is superficially attractive. It relates the price paid to downloads. And **Project COUNTER** now provides the standards by which usage is calculated. An intensively used journal is surely more valuable than one used little. Is it not? However, when we dig a little deeper into the potential effects of usage-based pricing, the cracks begin to appear.

In the UK, **JISC** trialed usage-based pricing with a range of publishers and librarians (**Harwood P.** & **Prior A.**, *Testing usage-based e-journal pricing*, *Learned Publishing* 21:2, 2008). It found that what was apparently a simple formula was beset with complexity:

- full-text downloads of freely available content had to be excluded: promotional articles, paid-for back files, open access articles (whether "temporary for a month" or author-paid).
- usage data from intermediaries such as subscription agents had to be included.
- the sum payable by the library was essentially unpredictable, and could be significantly affected by use by undergraduates where included on a reading list; there was no answer to the issue of running out of money.
- the administrative overhead in monitoring usage and calculating the outcomes was considerable, both for the publishers and the libraries concerned.
- the role of subscription agents in managing this type of acquisition was unresolved, and there was a general lack of confidence in their ability to administer the process.

More recent investigations have uncovered a lack of confidence in the robustness and reliability of some usage data, and concerns over pricing new acquisitions, whether existing journals new to the collection, or newly launched titles, as no usage data will exist until the second or third year.

There is a more fundamental problem with usage-based pricing. There will inevitably be wide variations in usage of the same journal between different institutions. Heavy usage drives up the cost of that resource. This penalizes libraries that are effective in attracting users by good communication with patrons and a fully integrated information system. They could be tempted to minimize usage by putting obstacles in the way of users, simply to keep costs down. That is simply not what libraries are about. A model that is directly antithetical to libraries' fundamental mission to encourage use of the collection is simply not acceptable.

Another issue that publishers have to take into account when restructuring online pricing is that of tax. Within Europe, the imposition of Value-Added-Tax (VAT) on electronic services means that the online price has to be 17 percent less that the print price in order to make the online journal financially attractive to libraries that cannot reclaim the tax. This is simply because the tax treatment of printed products and electronic services is different in most European countries. As VAT has been adopted in many countries around the world, albeit under different names, such as Goods and Services Tax, this is an international problem that publishers must address.

Where does this leave us? The first point to digest is that there is no simple answer to the quest for a simple, predictable, and transparent online pricing model. Publishers will continue to experiment, to see what is acceptable to the library community internationally. Moreover, such experimentation has to take place behind closed doors. Publishers cannot talk to each other about prices — or about license terms — simply because they are matters of competition between them. It would be a breach of anti-trust law in the USA or competition law in Europe and elsewhere to do this. But that does not stop customers from articulating what they collectively see as a rational and fair system. So patience is called for. And the thoughtful participation of libraries in pricing issues is essential. 🦅

Acquisitions Archaeology — Year Two From Stratum to Strata

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The best part of archaeology is finding a layer — a stratum — and working out its specific consistencies. The artifacts, features, even the soil that comprise the layer all lend themselves to internal coherence: they are, so the theory goes, all of a single time and place. However all the components of that layer came together, they did, somehow, come together. Even those elements of the stratum that do not seem to fit in or make sense can eventually be worked out with proper methods, sound reasoning, and a little creativity. The remains encapsulated in any single stratum are just so many pieces of a puzzle that, once solved, will reveal the answer to so many questions: Why these remains? What brought all these elements together in this particular place at this particular time?

What becomes more difficult is taking a step back, moving away from the details of a specific layer, and looking at the larger site. Taken together, the many layers tell a different story altogether — or, perhaps the larger story. In working top down from stratum to stratum, one can be reasonably sure of a reverse chronology. However, there is no guarantee of consistency or continuity. It would be misleading indeed to assume a steady, continuous sequence layer to layer. Historical events could certainly disrupt the sequence: construction, migration, war. Beyond the vicissitudes of history lie great geologic events: floods, earthquakes, volcanic eruptions. Markers for these events are easy enough to identify but they often complicate the flow of history and what some would call progress. Interpretation that spans strata provides a broad view and a more complete context; it also becomes more generalizing and, in some cases, less clarity.

History, some say, is circular; there is some degree of figurative truth in such an assertion in that certain patterns recur. I might go with thematic — linear change of ideas or unfolding of events, but not necessarily a straight line. One may discover categories of ideas that span multiple strata, loosely connected in space but also temporally linked. **Nietzsche** systematized such a connection into a "genealogy," an approach that places emphasis on "fundamental transformation, on disruptions, and psychological innovations and moral inventions that emerge in specific material and cultural contexts."[1]

This idea was developed and refined by **Foucault**, who used it to transform his own work and famously applied such a method to his popular later works. He "recognized that archaeology provided no account of transition from one system to another. Accordingly, he introduced a 'genealogical' approach which does not replace archaeol-

ogy but goes beyond it...."[2] Such an approach, in effect, provided the analytical framework to work through and among different strata. In using genealogy, **Foucault** broke through individual strata which he had been investigating to trace changes in concepts and practices through many layers.

I recently found myself in an interesting dilemma which brought to mind **Foucault's** switch to genealogy: as I move through issue after issue of "classic" *ATG* (often to the neglect of far more recent issues, I'm afraid to say), something strange is beginning to happen. History is starting to repeat itself, at least in a manner of speaking. I've noticed themes, as I will call them, developing between various strata. I very much enjoy reading through each issue to find out what it says beyond what it says, what it alludes to, what it foreshadows: I enjoy solving the riddle of a stratum's unique internal coherence. But I am starting to wonder about some things. While I have enjoyed working within individual strata (taking each issue to be its own layer), I cannot help but feel that I have uncovered just so many curiosities. These finds have proven to be worthy of examination, certainly, but they are somewhat isolated in their respective layers.

As I work down through the stack of *ATG* issues (though metaphorically I suppose I am actually working my way up), I am always coming across various discursive artifacts that catch my attention. At the same time, looking across all the strata (archaeology analogies aside, I actually do have the issues arranged horizontally!), I have started to ask the bigger question: "What does it all (taken together) mean?" I guess this is the same question **Nietzsche** posed about morality and that **Foucault** later applied to discipline and punishment. I now more fully appreciate the leap that **Foucault** made. Rather than continuing to uncover shards of the publishing-vending-acquisitions regime in fragments, the time has come to start working out what it all means.

Over the last year, I have found that *ATG* is fraught with what I will call preoccupations: "themes," if you will, or even "circles," if you must. Indeed, what might even be properly considered "anxieties." I have uncovered what seems to be a tangle of often present, never resolved problems. But these are problems in the existential sense; not to be solved, exactly, but whose constant presence help define who we are in a professional sense that goes beyond job titles and responsibilities.

For example, are any of these familiar to you in the course of your contemporary discourse...?

- Escalating prices of continuing resources.
- Implementing new technologies to manage and/or manipulate content.
- Declining or uncertain staffing.
- Budgetary pressures that force difficult decisions.
- Global events that impact how and what we collect.
- Vendor consolidation and/or sudden changes in the information marketplace.
- Growing prominence and continual innovation within electronic resources.
- Crises in monograph publishing and collecting due to one or more of the above.

I thought so. Take the example of CD-ROMs, which I had originally planned to write this issue's column about. Looking at a single stratum may be instructive; it can inform debates about historical conditions or make a useful comparison for our current practices. But after flipping through a number of issues and being unable to decide on which single stratum to focus, I realized that I needed to go beyond basic archaeology for the answers that I hoped to find. While fragments of CD-ROM discourse are scattered throughout a number of issues, what is revealed is more than a single artifact. What emerges is a preoccupation.

My brief look at CD-ROMs has shown it to be a medium that has caused a preoccupation through time, not just merely buried at a couple of points within it. The meteoric rise and fall of the CD-ROM is an interesting example of instability in technology created by a constantly changing environment of hyper-development, or at least that is my hypothesis at the outset. Still new just 20 years ago, the CD already seems antiquated — yet at its inception held a great deal of promise (not to mention hope) for the future of information storage and management. I believe the preoccupation with CD-ROMs is more complex than it initially appears, and so I will start my investigation there.

I hope that you will join me! 🌳

Endnotes
1. **Keith Ansell-Pearson**. "Introduction." In **Fredrich Nietzsche**, On the Genealogy of Morality (Revised Student Edition). Ed. By **Keith Ansell-Pearson**, Translated by **Carol Diethe**. *Cambridge University Press*: 2008. p. xx.
2. **Gary Gutting**. "Foucault." In **Robert Audi** (ed.), *The Cambridge Dictionary of Philosophy* (2nd ed.). *Cambridge University Press*: 2006. p. 231.

IMHBCO (In My Humble But Correct Opinion) — Soup Kitchens and Superstores: An (Imperfect) Google Books Analogy

by **Rick Anderson** (Associate Director for Scholarly Resources & Collections, Marriott Library, University of Utah; Phone: 801-721-1687) <rick.anderson@utah.edu>

Imagine this scenario: the Sunny Day Soup Kitchen is operating in a downtown neighborhood. It has limited funding, but the dedicated and skilled employees who run it do their best. Every day, from 7:00 am until 9:00 pm, they offer soup and bread to anyone who comes through the door. Theoretically, the service is available to all, but in reality there are limitations: only those with access to the facility can use its services, for example (home delivery is available, but only to residents of the immediate neighborhood). The dining area can seat 45 people at a time. The menu is limited as well: each day three kinds of soup and two kinds of bread are offered. Since the Sunny Day Soup Kitchen relies on a combination of (increasingly scarce) public funding and private donations, such limitations are inevitable.

Now imagine that **Wal-Mart** decides to open a soup kitchen of its own in the same neighborhood. Soup-Mart will operate in a manner that is in some ways similar to that of Sunny Day, with some very significant differences. First of all, Soup-Mart will offer a changing menu of 30 varieties of soup and ten varieties of bread each day, at no charge. The service will be available every day of the week, around the clock, and the dining area seats 500. Soup-Mart will use a small fleet of trucks to deliver soup and bread to shut-ins anywhere in the greater metro area, also at no charge. Costs will be underwritten in part by the chain's other commercial ventures and in part by advertising placed on the walls of the dining room, on the Soup-Mart delivery trucks, and on the bowls in which soup is delivered.

So far, the functional difference between Soup-Mart and the Sunny Day Soup Kitchen is really only one of scale — more soup, more bread, more seats, and more hours of service to more people. But here's